

Bavarian News

Vol. 6, Nr. 20

U.S. Army Garrisons Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt and Garmisch

October 27, 2010



Air liaison officers Maj. William Gillespie (left) and Maj. Scott Silvester traverse two medal cables during a team-building obstacle called the "Wild Woozy."

Army shares high ropes with Air Force

Boise-based unit takes a break to bolster morale in Bavaria

Story and photos by
Molly Hayden
Staff writer

For every military endeavor, communication is important for mission success. While suspended 40 feet above the ground, teetering on a wire cable, communication becomes especially critical.

"It's about working together," said Air Force Maj. Lee Dewald, an air liaison officer for the 124th Air Support Operations Squadron, from Gowen Field in Boise, Idaho. "You have to rely on each other for certain obstacles."

Dewald and 15 of his fellow airmen recently experienced one of the many "Soldier playgrounds" in Bavaria — a high ropes course tucked away near the small town of Tannesberg, Germany, approximately 30 miles southeast of Rose Barracks. The high ropes adventure was facilitated by Rose Barracks' Outdoor Rec-



The high ropes course, often used for training Soldiers, offers visiting airmen a fun, adventurous challenge, that builds teamwork and camaraderie.

reation, Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

Although the purpose of their trip to the Grafenwoehr Training Area was air support and weapons training with 172nd Infantry Brigade Soldiers, the day on the high ropes course was all about fun.

"I'm a big believer in morale,"

said Lt. Col. Bill Iuliano, squadron commander. "It's important that these guys are happy and that they have good experiences while training."

The course itself is compact with shaky wooden planks and thick ropes that sway easily with the wind. More than 10 obstacles are perched between 20 connected towers, and an intricate

cable system holds it all together. This adrenaline inducing course presents participants with challenges of varying degrees of difficulty.

For added safety, participants are secured to wires through a belay system. While this system prevented them from falling, willpower and endurance pushed participants onward through each obstacle.

Additionally, teamwork was essential to mastering the more difficult hurdles.

"That one was probably the toughest," said Tech. Sgt. Greg Kirk, pointing to the "Wild Woozy," a two-person obstacle where participants had to lean on each other (literally) for balance while traversing a cable wire. "But it was also the most fun. It's good to challenge yourself."

While many of the airmen had experienced parallels of the high ropes course in their everyday training, the atmosphere was a bit different.

"This is a nice break from the norm," said Lt. Col. Tom Schuler, air liaison officer. "It's good for the camaraderie of our group."

"It's hard to challenge this group at times," said Iuliano. "But they easily have fun."

Defender 6 sends

Safety is everyone's concern

As commanding general of IMCOM, the assistant chief of staff for Installation Management and the co-chair of the Services and Infrastructure Core Enterprise, my installation management and safety responsibilities extend beyond the boundaries of IMCOM. My commander's intent is to provide the facilities, programs and services required to support Army readiness, sustain the all-volunteer force and provide the infrastructure for current and future mission requirements. Safety is key to accomplishing my intent. It involves the prevention of material loss, but the focus is really on saving lives. Each loss, whether in combat or in the garrison, has an impact on our force.

In September, I spoke at the Army Senior Safety Tactical Symposium. It was my opportunity to say "thank you" to almost 500 safety professionals for the work they do to keep Soldiers, civilians and families safe. Their work impacts the conditions in which we train, work, live and play, both on duty and off duty. This includes driver training, home safety, child and family safety, weather conditions assessment, fire prevention, hazardous material handling, and weapons and range safety, to name just a few ways in which their work touches our daily lives.

I thanked them for their continuing diligence, their continuing efforts to monitor trends and address issues to prevent loss. A recent example was a six-month Armywide fire safety campaign in 2009. The campaign was launched to reverse the increasing number of military housing and facility fires, and succeeded in netting more than \$20 million in cost avoidance in the second half of the year. An ongoing example is a motor vehicle and motorcycle traffic safety program that is contributing to a downward trend in accidental fatalities. We are at the lowest level in more than seven years, and other military services are looking at our model.

So we can point to examples of

See SAFETY, page 2



Wuerzburg

Army Community Service travels to Wuerzburg.

White wines and roots dating to early 7th century makes this city on the Main River sing.

See page 9.

Soldier 360° fosters holistic healing

Story and photos by
Molly Hayden
Staff Writer

Soldiers have long functioned as warriors, but watching a room full of burly camouflaged men and women dip into the Warrior pose during a yoga session is still somewhat new to the Army.

With multiple deployments and post-traumatic stress disorder on the rise, the Army has shifted its medical practices to now incorporate holistic approaches to relieve stress, including yoga, meditation, acupuncture and spiritual fitness.

The new program, appropriately named Soldier 360°, is a comprehensive, multidisciplinary course designed to provide a full spectrum of wellness for redeploying Soldiers.

The course is both a primary psychological health intervention and a prevention program that provides training, tools, therapies and guidance to restore and enhance psychological readiness, resilience, physical fitness, nutritional status, spiritual health and relationships. It also gives Soldiers in leadership posi-



tions awareness, insight, tools and skills to better lead and support their Soldiers.

"(The program) provides in-depth explanations and tools on how to handle the stressful situations we face every day," said Sgt. 1st Class James Gibson, Joint Multinational Readiness Center, U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels. "My eyes have been opened to new techniques. This program will make me a better husband, father, Soldier and leader."

Soldier 360° is unique in that it helps eliminate the stigma of seeking help by

providing a structured course for leaders that provides various means to reduce stress while simultaneously giving them skills to mentor their Soldiers about health and wellness.

"I was skeptical, I'll admit it," said Staff Sgt. Jose Rendon, NCO Academy. "But I now understand that a program like this is needed, it gives us the tools to relax and reset."

Sgt. Edwin Ramos, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, agreed.

See WARRIORS, page 12

Soldiers hold a Warrior pose, practicing strength and balance, during a session of the Soldier 360° program. The program incorporates holistic approaches like yoga to provide a full spectrum of wellness for redeploying Soldiers.

Trick or Treat Safety Tips

- All children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult
- Escorts should conduct themselves in a safe and orderly fashion
- Residents in leased or economy housing are encouraged to escort their children to the nearest military housing area to participate
- Trick or treaters are required to use flashlights or battery-operated lanterns — Carrying burning candles is prohibited
- Escorts should wear light-colored or reflective-type clothing
- All motorists are reminded to drive with extreme caution.

Short Edition

Due to the sudden illness of our assistant editor, and other USAG Grafenwoehr Public Affairs staff shortages, it is necessary to offer a shorter, abbreviated version of this issue of the *Bavarian News*.

We anticipate being staffed to a level commensurate with providing the total newspaper product within the near future.

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Bavarian News

Environment, Health, Animals, Education and Community

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If you have newsworthy ideas or stories to submit, coordinate with the managing editor at 475-7113, or e-mail jeremy.buddemeier@eur.army.mil. The final decision on whether content will run rests with the editor. The editorial deadline for articles and announcements is noon on Tuesday, the week prior to the publication date. Publication dates can be found at www.milcom.de.

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Water Tower art by Dane Gray

Safety ...

ways in which their work touches our daily lives. I thanked them for their continuing diligence, their continuing efforts to monitor trends and address issues to prevent loss. A recent example was a six-month Armywide fire safety campaign in 2009. The campaign was launched to reverse the increasing number of military housing and facility fires, and succeeded in netting more than \$20 million in cost avoidance in the second half of the year. An ongoing example is a motor vehicle and motorcycle traffic safety program that is contributing to a downward trend in accidental fatalities. We are at the lowest level in more than seven years, and other military services are looking at our model.

Six considerations Everyone is a safety officer. Everyone has an obligation to look out for themselves and the Soldiers, civilians and families around them. The requirements are in place — we have The Army Safety Program, AR 385-10 and IMCOM's Safety Program Regulation. In order to improve our safety efforts, there are six things I ask us all to consider:

Right resources First, we will not cut corners or funds to save money at the expense of our safety program. It is fundamentally

unwise to do so. Why would we want to negatively affect a program that saves lives? Rather than cutting corners to save money, we should put money toward the right resources in order to improve the Safety Program. In doing so, we will have a positive impact in keeping the Army Family intact.

Culture of safety Second, when we allocate resources for safety programs, we need to make sure to reach all members of the Army Family, not just active duty Soldiers. Funds need to be allocated for our safety programs to reach Soldiers of all components, retirees, civilians and all their families. Only by reaching every member of our communities can we instill a culture that puts safety first — a culture that protects our Army family and keeps the Army mission ready.

Community effort Third, everyone must support the senior commanders as they are responsible for the life of every Soldier, civilian and family member on their installation. Everyone must embrace the safety program and be actively involved. While the commander is the one ultimately responsible for mission accomplishment and the safety of people and resources assigned to him or her, all of us must know the safety program and carry it out to standard. The safety program is the command-

er's program and all of us are safety officers.

Motorcycle safety Fourth, I have been a motorcycle driver my entire adult life and have never had a motorcycle accident. I firmly believe that it is not a matter of luck, but preparation. I drive my motorcycle only if I have the right frame of mind, the right protective equipment and a planned route.

Many people label motorcycles as unsafe. However, it is not the motorcycle that is unsafe, it is the driver. Leaders need to make sure the appropriate safety training is available prior to a new rider driving a motorcycle. It is not smart for an untrained motorcycle driver to drive his or her new motorcycle on post in order to learn how to operate it properly. Motorcycle driving simulators are necessary and should be made available at every IMCOM installation.

Plan 2.0 Fifth, the Installation Management Campaign Plan 2.0 is being launched this month at the Garrison Commanders' Conference in San Antonio. The plan's Line of Effort on Safety charges commanders and other leaders to lead the way in changing behavior to prevent accidents, and to empower Soldiers, civilians and families at all levels to speak up when they see someone ignoring safety rules or doing some-

thing risky. Everyone will be held accountable for accident prevention. The LOE calls for providing effective POV safety programs; heightening safety awareness; employing hazard control measures; requiring and promoting safe, healthy practices; and support for the senior commander.

100 percent Sixth, I challenge all of you to look at the IMCP's Safety LOE and ask yourselves, "What are we missing?" I often mention the 80 percent solution as being good enough to proceed, but this LOE is an instance when we need to keep aiming for 100 percent. We cannot be satisfied as long as we have a single accident. If safety requirements are not adequate, we will improve them. If we are doing something ineffective out there, we will stop. But if no one tells me, we cannot correct the issue. I need your input.

When we think about the safety program, we should not focus on saving money. We should not concentrate our efforts on finding different ways to reduce costs, but on how to make our safety program better. It is about saving the lives of our Army family. That is the passion every individual must pursue. When you practice safety and teach others about safety, you are saving lives — and I cannot think of a higher calling.

Commander's Message



November events to honor Soldiers, Families, Veterans

November is special month. It is Military Family Appreciation Month and we celebrate Veteran's Day. The success of our military is not limited to the battlefield but extends to our ability to support those families that are also making sacrifices for us. Families are a vital link between our Soldiers and the Army's ability to maintain ready and responsive forces. Our ACS is celebrating 45 years of service and celebrating Military Family Appreciation Month with a special day planned for Nov.3 at the Rose Barracks ACS, building 322. Between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., Rose Barracks ACS will host a free family friendly afternoon of storytelling and myth busting with food and prizes.

On Veteran's Day we have two very special events planned. We were one of four European installations selected to receive a special donation of fresh steaks from Cooks in the Valley and Harris Home. These steaks will be flown in and then cooked and served at the Grafenwoehr Main Post DFAC and the Stryker Inn at Rose Barracks from 1100-1400 to ID card holders. Harris Home Ranch in California donated the fresh steak to "Cooks from the Valley," a non-profit organization which supports and expresses their appreciation for our service members by offering their time to come and serve as chefs for these events. Our Directorate of Logistics and FMWR are coordinating here, and we hope everyone will take advantage of this thoughtful and generous Veteran's Day donation.

The Grafenwoehr Military Community was also

selected for another special event. Cable sports network ESPN will be broadcasting its SportsCenter live from the Grafenwoehr parade field from 3 – 9 p.m. This special broadcast of SportsCenter will honor veterans and highlight the Soldiers, Families, and civilians of the U.S. Army Europe. We want everyone to come down and join this special Veteran's Day ceremony that will also include musical entertainment, static displays, and demonstrations of military vehicles and equipment. A Warrior Challenge competition, sponsored by JMTC, will feature teams representing various Army units here in Bavaria. ESPN will broadcast several of the events and award the winning team a trophy during a live, on-air segment of the program. There will also be a community tailgate party in the PX parking lot. The day will replicate the ESPN college "game day" experience, so we need you to come down and support the Army team! Please pass the word to other family members in the States so they can look for you since the event will air live in the U.S.

Following our Veteran's Day holiday, Germans recognize Nov. 14 as Memorial Day. This is not an official holiday, but it is a nationally recognized activity. Ceremonies commemorating service members who have lost their lives are held in many of our near-



by partnering communities. We have traditionally participated in the City of Grafenwoehr's ceremony. This year the City of Grafenwoehr asked to recognize our fallen Soldiers as part of the ceremony, to include a display with the names of Soldiers we have lost. I encourage the community to attend this ceremony which begins at 10 a.m. in the old church in downtown Grafenwoehr.

With all the special events going on this month (and I hadn't even mentioned Thanksgiving) we can't forget to focus on our mission. Every day is about safety, but during November, IMCOM is conducting safety stand-downs at all garrisons. USAG Grafenwoehr will conduct its stand-down Nov. 23. The event is designed to heighten awareness of safety issues. Winter and the holidays can include increased risks such as hazardous weather and traffic conditions. We will use our stand-down day to conduct training, correct deficiencies and promote safety initiatives. While emergencies services will be maintained, normal services may be shut down or limited. Please remember, a one-day shut-down may help prevent one accident so there is no comparison.

In closing, I would like for you to mark your calendars and join us in recognizing these special November activities.

*Col. Vann Smiley
Commander, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

CSM Corner



Garrison applauds all who contributed to Fall cleanup

First off, a huge round of applause and thanks to all the Soldiers, families, civilians and local national employees for the exemplary job cleaning up our community.

It was a lot of work, but everyone was out there with rakes, trash bags and wheel barrows putting forth a huge effort to beautify our community. Your pride in our community shows. Thank you.

This month is National American Indian Month which will be celebrated, Nov. 18, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Grafenwoehr Performing Arts Center.

Join us as this talented group shares their cultural heritage through song, dance and a plethora of ethnic food samples, plus a special treat of an inspirational poetry reading. Don't miss this extraor-

dinary event celebrating the contributions and diversity of our Native American Soldiers, families and civilians.

Another group being recognized is the military family and there is no amount of thanks that can express the level of appreciation for their commitment, strength and resiliency. They are the backbone of the Soldier. It is what keeps them strong. Their struggles and successes are just as important as their Soldiers'.

Each day they face separated, they grow stronger and more independent and yet they remain ready to receive their loved ones back into the fold at a moment's notice. This dedication is seldom fully appreciated.

Thank you families for all you do to help keep our Soldiers strong and ready for the

fight.

Spc. Nicholas Davis also deserves an enormous round of applause. Davis, a preventive dentistry specialist at



our own U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr Dental Clinic, will represent USAG Grafenwoehr in the Operation Rising Star finals at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia in November. This competition has propelled several Soldiers and military family members into the musi-

cal spotlight. If he wins, Davis could be recording his own three song demo in Los Angeles this fall.

The finals will be broadcast Nov. 14, 16, 18 and 20 on American Forces Network at 8 p.m. (Central European Time). During the first competition on Saturday, all 12 contestants will compete for six spaces at the Monday semifinals. The final three will compete on Wednesday night. Davis' success will depend on his voice, votes from the judges and especially his local fans.

MWR and the Grafenwoehr Performing Arts Center have coordinated with the Main Post and Rose Barracks' Warrior Zones and BOSS to have special Operation Rising Star viewing parties on all four nights to help boost support. This will enable all local

fans to band together to watch Davis perform live via AFN and then vote via the internet or phone. As they say in the theatre, break a leg, Spc. Davis.

We hope to see everyone supporting these upcoming events, personnel and family members.

Once again, thanks for all the hard work in cleaning up your community.

*Command Sgt. Maj.
William Berries
CSM, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

U.S. Army Europe aviators tell story of helping Bundeswehr troops during Taliban ambush

Pilots, medics relay story of day they made several rescues amid barrage of hostile fire
by Sgt. Joel Salgado
U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs

German troops serving with NATO's International Security Assistance Force were ambushed by Taliban forces in Afghanistan, April 2. Soldiers from U.S. Army Europe's 12th Combat Aviation Brigade responded to the Germans' calls for help, and braved enemy fire to evacuate the Bundeswehr troops. For their courageous efforts, 14 of the CAB's Soldiers – 12 aviators and 2 medics – earned the Bundeswehr's Gold Cross of Honor for valor. Shortly after their return from deployment, eight of the Soldiers talked about that fateful day. The Soldiers will earn medals from the U.S. Army as well: Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jason Lacrosse will receive the Silver Star and the other seven Soldiers interviewed here will receive the Distinguished Flying Cross.

“He kept coming, so they told me to pop off a couple of shots, and he kept coming after several shots in his direction.”

Sgt. Steven Shumaker, crew chief

Salgado: How did the morning (of April 2) begin?

Capt. Robert McDonough, pilot: I remember stepping out of the tent on the 2nd of April and hearing gunfire off in the distance. At that point, we put everybody on a high state of alert and kept them near the area. At approximately 1300 a nine-line (medical evacuation request) came down, saying we had injured German soldiers. We got our first up crew ready to launch.

Salgado: What did you do to get ready?

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jason Lacrosse, pilot: Chief Brown ran to the command post to get all the information, while myself and Sgt. Shumaker went up to the aircraft to get it ready to go. Staff Sgt. Brown went to get the patient information and location. We got the aircraft ready to start and waited to get the grid (coordinates) and information. When Chief Brown came back with the information, I remember reading on the nine-line there was possible enemy in the area. I said, ‘No big deal. There’s always possible enemy in the area.’ So we waited for the launch approval then we took off and headed for the grid coordinates provided.

Salgado: After your helicopter left the base, what was going on?

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jason Brown, pilot: As we were coming into the (landing zone), we were doing a normal approach. Then it sounded like somebody lit off a whole brick of Black Cats (a type of firecracker). I remember looking out the door and seeing the German Marder (Infantry Fighting Vehicle) laying waste to whatever was behind us. We started to do our go-around and saw smoke get popped off at our 11 o’clock at Hill 432. We came around and landed. Staff Sgt. Brown hopped out to see what was going on with our communications.

Hot landing zone

Salgado: What happened on the ground?

Staff Sgt. Travis Brown, medic: The first thing the guys on the ground said was, ‘Why did you land?’ ‘Because you popped smoke,’ I told them. They said they were not ready, we’ll call you when we’re ready, give us 15 minutes. At that time we still didn’t have any contact with the ground forces on the radio.

Lacrosse: We took off out of that LZ, took fire from the town on our right, banked left took more fire, banked right took more fire and then decided to go loiter somewhere else so we could stop getting shot at.

Brown: We talked to our chase bird and they suggested we loiter over this plateau after they watched us jink and dive through all the fire.

Lacrosse: We loitered over the plateau for about 15 minutes then decided to return to the LZ. (We) landed and Staff Sgt. Brown hopped out and ran up Hill 432 to talk to the German captain to find out what was going on and try to get some (communications).

Brown: Sgt. Shumaker jumped out to provide security, and that’s when that incident with the guy trying to walk up to the helicopter happened.

Salgado: What happened?

Sgt. Steven Shumaker, crew chief: He was coming for us with a purpose. I called it out to the pilots and they told me to wave him off. He kept coming, so they told me to pop off a couple of shots, and he kept coming after several shots in his direction. At this point the Afghan police heard me engaging him, and they decided to come help out, and they took him into custody. By this point Staff Sgt. Brown was back at the aircraft, so we took off — still without a patient.

Second bird

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Nelson Visaya, pilot: We were sitting on the flight line and I heard you guys having communication problems. So I fired up my aircraft and tried to relay communications between our command and you guys.

Brown: We decided to stay in the area and we were taking fire from every little town we flew over. That’s when that white car came under us. It started shooting at us as we flew over it. It was the loudest shooting I heard all day.

Lacrosse: We finally talked to the Joint Terminal Attack Controller on the ground and he said the patients were ready for pickup, but the LZ is still hot. I don’t remember saying it but apparently I said, ‘It’s not too hot for us.’

Salgado: Now you’re at the LZ for a second time. What was going on this time?

Lacrosse: We went in for a second time to the first LZ we tried to land at. We came in fast

to avoid fire. The German Marders were firing off their grenade launchers. One flew right over the nose of the aircraft and two (rocket-propelled grenades) flew under the tail boom as we came in.

Salgado: It sounds kind of like ‘Black Hawk Down’ (the story of a helicopter crew under attack in Somalia in 1993). Gunfire aside, what did you do on the ground?

Lacrosse: We landed, and Staff Sgt. Brown got off and recovered the patient, put him on, and we took off and headed back to Kunduz. We got back to Kunduz and dropped off that patient.

Returning to the hot zone

Salgado: A pretty short trip in and out, then. When you returned to Kunduz what did you do with your patients?

Shumaker: Sgt Brown walked with the medical team on the ground toward the ambulance to give them a brief and Sgt. Gattis — the other team’s medic — came over to see what’s going on and check if Staff Sgt. Brown needed a resupply. I told the pilots, ‘We have a medic. Let’s go.’ I knew we needed to get back out there. Staff Sgt. Brown came running back and hopped into the aircraft.



Photo by Sgt. Joel Salgado

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jason Lacrosse describes his crew’s actions on the day they came to the aid of German troops being ambushed by Taliban forces in Afghanistan in April, during a Sept. 28 interview in Ansbach, Germany. Fourteen Soldiers from the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade earned the German Cross of Honor in gold, and will be recognized by the U.S. Army, for their actions.

Lacrosse: We took off, went back to the LZ to get the second patient, and were taking fire the whole way. As we got to the LZ, I thought I saw personnel in the wood line firing at us. I said, ‘Hey, Sgt. Shumaker, are those people in the wood line firing at us?’ He said, ‘No, I don’t think so. They’re like 300 meters away.’ I called Black Magic, our chase bird, and told them we were taking fire from the wood line off to our right. That’s when Black Magic came in and floated their aircraft, putting themselves between us and the incoming fire, and suppressed the enemy in the wood line. We got the other patient in while this was happening, took off, and headed back to Kunduz. That’s when we got the call that about the (improvised explosive



photo by LTJg Nick Kalman

14 U.S. MEDEVAC crewmen are awarded the German Gold Cross for risking their lives to come to the rescue of German soldiers during a firefight in Kunduz, Afghanistan. Germany’s Gold Cross medal is one of the nation’s highest awards for valor and this is the first time in history foreigners have ever received the award.

device) blast and that there were four more patients in urgent condition.

Salgado: What did you do to respond to that call?

McDonough: I remember hearing over the radio, ‘We got four more. We have a mass (casualty) situation. We need second up.’ We took off as a flight of three after the other two aircraft got back and headed back to the area. As we were coming in, I remember seeing the smoke and bullets coming under the aircraft.

Sgt. Antonio Gattis, medic: As we were flying over this wooded area, I heard a popping noise. It sounded like it was coming from inside the aircraft. I turned back to Baker and asked, ‘Are you shooting?’ and he said no. I looked back down. I could hear it again. And then I saw

and it was the first time the German fueling crew did a hot refuel. That’s when Shumaker noticed we had a round in our transmission housing. I said, ‘Is it downing my aircraft?’ Nope. Let’s go.’ We all took off that’s when they gave us a new grid coordinate for a different location. So we didn’t go back into that bad LZ. We headed up there and both of our aircraft landed, (and) we picked up the four urgent German soldiers. Once we got them, that’s when we headed back to Kunduz. That’s when we shut down and started resupplying and getting fuel. We thought we were done.

Baker: We were inspecting our aircraft and seeing all the bullet holes, when we got another call.

Lacrosse: A call came in that another (German) Dingo truck hit an IED, and we had four more patients that were in urgent condition. So I said, ‘OK, spool up. Let’s go.’

Baker: I remember Mr. Visaya, who is our maintenance test pilot, running around inspecting of all of the aircraft saying they were good, let’s go.

‘Naval’ engagement

Lacrosse: We headed back to the same LZ, picked up four more patients, and headed back to Kunduz. That’s when we were engaged by a man in a boat. Our chase aircraft suppressed him and we continued on to Kunduz.

McDonough: We later joked we were engaged by the Taliban navy.

Lacrosse: We started checking our aircraft when we got back, and refueling, hoping we wouldn’t have to go out again. But that was it.

Salgado: So overall an eventful day. Is there anything you would like to say to the German forces you worked with?

Lacrosse: The German soldiers did such an amazing job protecting us as we came into the LZ and holding off over 200 Taliban they were fighting that day. It was as if everything worked out like a symphony.

Baker: When we first got there (to Afghanistan), we had classes and we told them (the German ISAF forces), ‘If you have somebody injured, call us.’ I think it finally set in that day that we were going to come and we weren’t just talking. I think it opened eyes about what we could do together.

Editor’s Note: The remaining six Soldiers from the 12th CAB who earned medals for their actions in Afghanistan had not redeployed at the time of these interviews. They are Chief Warrant Officer 3 Steven Husted; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sean Johnson; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Eric Wells; Sgt. William Ebel; Spc. Todd Marchese and Spc. Gregory Martinez.

Video interviews are available at U.S. Army Europe’s YouTube page at www.youtube.com/USArmyEurope or as downloadable podcasts on iTunes at <http://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/army-podcasts-the-u-s-army/id368518662>. More photos are available at www.flickr.com/photos/usarmyeurope_images/page21.

2SCR Soldier remembered as a hero

Story and photos by
Sgt. Jes L. Smith

16th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FOB HADRIAN, Afghanistan — Soldiers from the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment gathered, Oct. 8, to remember Pfc. Class Cody Allen Board, a rifleman with 3rd Platoon, Apache Troop, 1st Squadron, 2SCR.

His young life of 19 years was cut short, Oct. 4, after being struck by an improvised explosive device, while on a patrol in the Chora District, Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan.

Board, a native of McKinney, Texas, joined the Army, July 8, 2009. He attended Basic and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Benning, Ga. After finishing training, he was assigned to the 2SCR in Vilseck, Germany, and deployed to Afghanistan this summer in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“Only a small percentage of Americans stand up to serve their country,” said Pfc. Andrew Arthur, a rifleman with 3rd Platoon. “Board was one of those American

Heroes and he leaves something in each one of us.”

By the sorrow on the faces of Soldiers at the ceremony, it was clear what Arthur was talking about.

Speakers at the ceremony described Board as one of those Soldiers who was motivated for every task and dedicated to his fellow Soldiers.

“Board was a great friend, a squared-away Soldier and to many at home, an American hero,” said Arthur. “He will always be remembered and never forgotten.”

Board’s platoon leader, 1st Lt. Michael Poce, credits the people who raised Board for him becoming the kind of man and Soldier he was.

“Good people generally come from good families,” said Poce.

He went on to talk about the first call he made back to the Board’s parents and how their main concern was about Board’s fellow Soldiers and friends.

“How are the guys doing asked the parents,” said Poce. “Of all the questions they could have asked, all they wanted to

know was how the other Soldiers were doing.”

Poce added that Board’s parents encouraged the Soldiers to continue the mission because that is what their son would have wanted them

They have said goodbye to their comrade and pushed back out to do their jobs. All the while remembering the friend they lost but will never forget.



to do. So for now the mission goes on for the Soldiers of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment.

Board is survived by his parents, Melissa and Christopher Board, as well as his brothers Aaron and Tyler Board.

MGS Platoon conducts operations

Story and photo by
Sgt. Jes L. Smith

16th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

URUZGAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — In the combat zone there aren’t conventional Army weapons ranges, despite that Soldiers of the Mobile Gun System Platoon, 1st Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, from Vilseck Germany, fired and zeroed their Stryker Mobile Gun Systems at Forward Operating Base Hadrian, Afghanistan, recently.

“The range is a piece of land with a mountain as a back drop,” said Staff Sgt. Donald Phillips, the master gunner for 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment. “Pretty much a natural range.”

The Stryker Mobile Gun System is the anti-tank version of the Strykers and it is equipped with a 105 mm main gun, the same gun originally mounted on the M1 Abrams tank, and it is designed to bring accurate, heavy firepower to light-armored units.

“Accuracy is key,” said 2nd Lt. Bradley Y. Winsted II, the platoon leader for the MGS platoon. “The last

thing we want is any unneeded casualties or and unneeded damage to property.”

The main factor as to why a MGS needs to be rezeroed has to do with the ammunition.

Each time new ammunition is delivered it has to be checked with the existing ones. If they have different lot numbers, then the weapons have

“The MGS is the big bad boy in the neighborhood. Everyone plays nice when we roll in.”

2nd Lt. Bradley Y. Winsted II, MGS platoon leader

to be rezeroed to the new rounds.

Lot numbers indicate when and who made the rounds and have slight variations that the guns need to compensate for.

“The system is very accurate,” said Sgt. 1st Class Eric A. Bradfield, the platoon sergeant for the MGS platoon. “It usually only takes two to three rounds to zero.”

On top of zeroing ranges, Soldiers also conduct bore-sighting procedures to keep the main gun ac-

curate.

“Bore sighting is where you bring your main gun and your sight together as one,” said Bradfield. “You want the sight and the gun seeing the same thing.”

“Armor crewman are always taught if time is available, bore sight,” said Phillips.

Lastly, in Afghanistan dusty equipment is the norm. To keep the systems running, crewmen of the Stryker platoon conduct daily maintenance.

“The crew members of these vehicles are doing a great job to counteract the effects of dust on the mechanical components of the MGS,” said Phillips. “If you take care of it, it will take care of you.”

While keeping the gun zeroed is important, the MGS system doesn’t have to fire to have an effect on the battlefield. The size of its gun alone is enough to detour the enemy from engaging in conflict.

“The MGS is the big bad boy in the neighborhood,” said Winsted. “Everyone plays nice when we roll in.”

Dragoons Celebrate Hispanic Roots

Courtesy photo by
Sgt. Jerry Wilson
2SCR Public Affairs

ZABUL, Afghanistan — In celebration of National Hispanic Heritage month, Dragoons at Forward Operating Base Lagman, Afghanistan, received a lesson in cultural pride, Oct. 2, during a special event held to recognize the contributions made to society by Hispanics.

The highlight of the evening was a demonstration of dances from Hispanic countries around the world. A dance troupe made up of Hispanic Soldiers and some civilians performed some traditional Latin folk dances as well as many contemporary ones like the Bachata, Cumbia, Merengue and Raggaton. The guest speaker for the evening was Maj. Raul Rivas, regimental S-2 officer. Rivas joked that though his family comes from El Salvador, his Hispanic influences were minimal. Rivas recalled a recent mission in Mexico.

“Most members of the team suggested that this would be an easy task, because of my heritage and background,” he explained. “They automatically assumed that I spoke Spanish and that made me a Mexican.”

“I replied that the first time I had a taco or enchilada was from an American restaurant,” he said, “and

the name of the restaurant was Taco Bell.”

Rivas then went on to explain that the rich Latino heritage of many Americans has its roots in diverse countries spread across the globe including Puerto Rico, Venezuela, El Salvador, Mexico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

“Our Latino population comes from many nations and for many reasons,” Rivas said. “They are the very same reasons that the first immigrants to America’s shores arrived here over 200 years ago. We come for political freedom, economic opportunities and most of all, to make a better life for our children.”

“Being an American of Latino heritage makes me proud to know that I have a past as well as a future. Knowing the richness of my heritage helps me to be the best I can be,” he said.

The evening was concluded by the traditional breaking of a pinata. Hispanic Heritage Month ran from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15. Even deployed to remote locations such as Afghanistan, 2SCR still takes the time to celebrate the cultural diversity found within

the Dragoon family. Col. James Blackburn, the 75th colonel of the regiment, closed the evening by presenting participants with certificates of appreciation for their hard work. The evening did not stop there, however, as guests were invited to stay after the program for additional dancing to some great Latin music.



Sgt. 1st Class Alejandra Robinson wows the audience with a traditional dance from Mexico.

ANA Graduates First NCO Improvement Class

Courtesy photos by
Sgt. Jerry Wilson
2SCR Public Affairs

ZABUL, Afghanistan — Thursday, Oct. 7, was graduation day at Camp Eagle near Forward Operating Base Apache in Zabul Province. The Afghan National Army celebrated the graduation of 23 noncommissioned officers from the first ANA NCO Improvement Course.

The two-week course was taught by 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment Soldiers, who focused on tactics and patrol techniques. These are skills that will help the ANA survive as soldiers in Afghanistan.

The class covered escalation of force, rules of engagement, troop leading procedures, first aid and mounted and dismounted movement techniques. In addition, students were taught how to recognize and react to an improvised explosive device.

“The program was designed to build on our partnership with the ANA,” said Staff Sgt. Matthew Russell, the senior instructor. “It was designed to get them up to speed on tactics.”

“It will help them on patrols with American forces and enable them to continue to build on their security and

protect the civilians of Afghanistan,” he said.

“This group of NCOs did exceptionally well,” Russell continued. “They were highly motivated and dedicated to their duties here from 0800 to 1600. When we were working, they were very high speed.” Russell said that the students’ attitudes toward learning made his job easy.

“They always showed up on time and stayed motivated throughout the day,” he said.

According to Russell, these students will go back to their units and teach the lessons they had learned to their fellow Soldiers.

“These NCOs are ready to go back and train their Soldiers to be more effective on patrol,” he said.

Russell said that six of his students have been identified to continue training for another week. These six will receive extra training to equip them to become the instructors for the next group of recruits. The ultimate goal of the program is to fully equip Afghan NCOs to train their Soldiers with all the skills necessary to defend their homeland. Programs such as this assist the Afghan National Army to become stronger and more independent.



ANA Soldiers advance on targets during the final field exercise of the ANA NCO Improvement Course at Forward Operating Base Apache.



An unforgettable day at the range with dad

Photos by Maj. Joseph Buccino
by Sgt. Charles D. Crail
172nd Infantry Brigade Public Affairs

When dad's daily work involves 70-tons of rumbling fire-belching destruction, it can be a little tricky for him to convey exactly what a day in the office is like.

So when the families of A Co., 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, came out to the range, Oct. 8, they got a firsthand glimpse at not only the hardware, but also the raw power of the armored behemoths that support TF 1-2nd Infantry, 172nd Infantry Brigade.

"I think it's really good, family members coming out here and seeing what the husbands do, especially on the tanks," said Staff Sgt. Joseph Rodriguez, tank commander, A Co., 3-66th. "A lot

of family members don't get to see what tankers do because they are such big weapons, the noise and they are just so dangerous."

Nevertheless, his 3-year-old daughter was undeterred and insisted on seeing 'Poppy's tank.'

"I'm really impressed about the tank shooting because I never thought it was going to be such a big boom. And the shaking," his wife Stephanie said. "It is really awesome to see something like that because my husband has been doing that for so long already."

The thundering sights and sounds of the tanks were not the only delight on display. The families of the Annihilator Company also had the opportunity to

climb in and out of static tanks, observe and experience room clearing in a glass house and feel the rotor wash of practice medical evacuations

from the training area's new Lakota helicopter.

Pointing to the glass house demonstration, Rodriguez explained, "Not only can we do tanking, we can do dismounted operations as well, because in today's Army, we have to be pretty versatile."

Just as versatility on the battlefield is a combat multiplier, resourcefulness in conducting training events, such as including the family members, can help build resiliency at home.

"Those display tanks let the Soldiers show their family members what they do," said Capt. Peter George, commander, A Co., 3-66th, as he provided a tour of the day's events. "Show them what the driver's hole looks like, the gunner station looks like. To actually get in and hit the ammo door and watch it move back and see what their

(husband's) piece is."

"For us in Annihilator Company," George continued, "our family is not just the Soldiers, it is the extended family, all of the family members."

Building the larger family and connecting father's with their spouses and children was the greatest goal of the day's events.

"I thought it was great," said Heather Rowe. "There are a lot of wives who never get to see this. This is actually my first time. I think it was also really exciting for the guys to show us what they do."

"My daughter is 13 and it's really hard to get her to enjoy hanging out with us at all," Rowe said

talking about her family's impression from the demonstration. "And she was really glad she came."



Family Members of the 172nd Infantry Brigade receive close personal tours of the hardware used by A Co., 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, here, Oct. 8.



Family Members of the 172nd Infantry Brigade were treated to the raw firepower displayed by A Co., 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment.

18th CSSB wins 21st TSC maintenance excellence award

Battalion to compete at U.S. Army Europe

Story and photo by
Capt. Jennifer Dyrce
18th CSSB Public Affairs

Hard work, sweat, a few tears and a consolidated motor pool were the key ingredients to the 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion's recent first place win in the 21st Theater Sustainment Command's Army Award for Maintenance Excellence active duty large unit category.

The AAME is a maintenance excellence award hosted by the chief of staff of the Army and selects the best maintenance program in the Army annually. At all levels, units are judged on mission accomplishments, the effective use of maintenance resources, innovative management actions and quality of life programs.

"We are doing this not to blow our own horns but to recognize the unsung heroes of the 18th CSSB — the mechanics, clerks and maintenance managers who start early and work late daily. No one rolls without them," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Darrin Garner, battalion maintenance officer.

Competing for the AAME award helped to jumpstart the battalion into creating a battalionwide consolidated motor pool.

"We found the companies were doing their own thing. The creation of a consolidated motor pool allowed us to have one standard across the board," said Garner. "This helped the companies eliminate unnecessary steps in their maintenance programs."

The consolidation has exponentially improved the battalion's overall readiness rate. The 18th CSSB has been able to sync battalion programs like driver's training with the company schedules. In addition to the prescribed load list, clerks for the companies are now all working out of the same office and are able to cross talk about tracking or dispatching parts to avoid unnecessary ordering. This, in turn, saves the companies and battalion money.

Even though each physical inspection brings extra work to the Soldiers, their spirits remain spirits.

"I feel like my hard work is being recognized. It's great to have higher agencies come down and check out what we do here," said Sgt. Nitendra Prasad, an armorer with 1st Inland Cargo Transfer Company. "I'm excited to be part of an organization that takes pride in its equipment and people."

Judges from U.S. Army Europe will be inspecting the 18th CSSB at the next level of competition during the first two weeks of November.



Nitendra Prasad, an armorer with 1st Inland Cargo Transfer Company, and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Darrin Garner, battalion maintenance officer, inspect the arms room against the 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion's Army Award for Maintenance Excellence workbook.



41st Trans. Co. prepares to move to Fort Polk

Future duty location scheduled for early 2011

by Capt. Jennifer Dyrce
18th CSSB Public Affairs

The 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion's 41st Transportation Company has begun the necessary steps needed to complete a successful equipment move to its future duty location at Fort Polk, La., scheduled for early 2011.

"We are looking to try to get a majority of this done before the company redeploys so that they can focus on reintegration, family time and block leave. They have been hard at work for the last year, and we want to make sure

that we can take as much work load off them as possible," said Capt. Terrance Flanagan, the company's rear detachment commander.

More than 1,000 pieces of equipment will be moved across the globe to Louisiana. Currently the equipment is located in three different locations: Afghanistan, Grafenwoehr and Kaiserslautern.

The initial step is to move the equipment from Grafenwoehr to Kaiserslautern. The equipment will then be inventoried, cleaned and shipped to Fort Polk. The majority of the Afghanistan equipment is being sent directly

to Fort Polk.

"The entire year we have been working to reduce the footprint of the company by turning in excess equipment and buildings. This is now the final phase before the company completes its move to Fort Polk," said Staff Sgt. Sioualofa Mayville, 41st Trans. Co. supply sergeant.

"Creating a seamless and supported move for all the redeploying Soldiers of 41st Transportation Company has been a top priority for the 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion," said 1st Lt. Alan Sawyer, 18th CSSB supply officer in charge.

VFW seeks Christmas support for orphan program

by VFW Post 9334
News Release

Members of VFW Post 9334 will conduct their annual toy and clothing drive for the Detsky Domov Orphanage and the Most Baby Clinic in the Czech Republic. Each year the VFW is assisted by the Torch Club Dragons from the Netzeberg Youth Center (Bldg 9080). Those interested in contributing to this Annual Christmas Program can sign for cards, purchase a present, and return it to the Netzeberg Youth Center or the Vilseck Commissary throughout the month of November.

There will be two collection points:

At the Vilseck Commissary during normal operating hours and Netzeberg Youth Center, Building 9080, Monday-Saturday, from 2-6 p.m.

The VFW's youth club will wrap the present if it is delivered unwrapped. Once the card and gift is returned, donors may keep the picture as a memoir.

For more, contact Jim Dicks DSN 475-9393 or CIV 0171-710-6647.

Both communities have responded well to this program for the last six years. Please assist our organization with making children happy for Christmas — they have no one else to count on except you.

Energy tip

■ Computer monitors use 60 watts of power per hour. Monitors should be turned off you expect to be gone for more than 10 minutes.

Find out the truth on important Blackhawk Family issues like, deployments, events, programs and policy from the official voice of the brigade.



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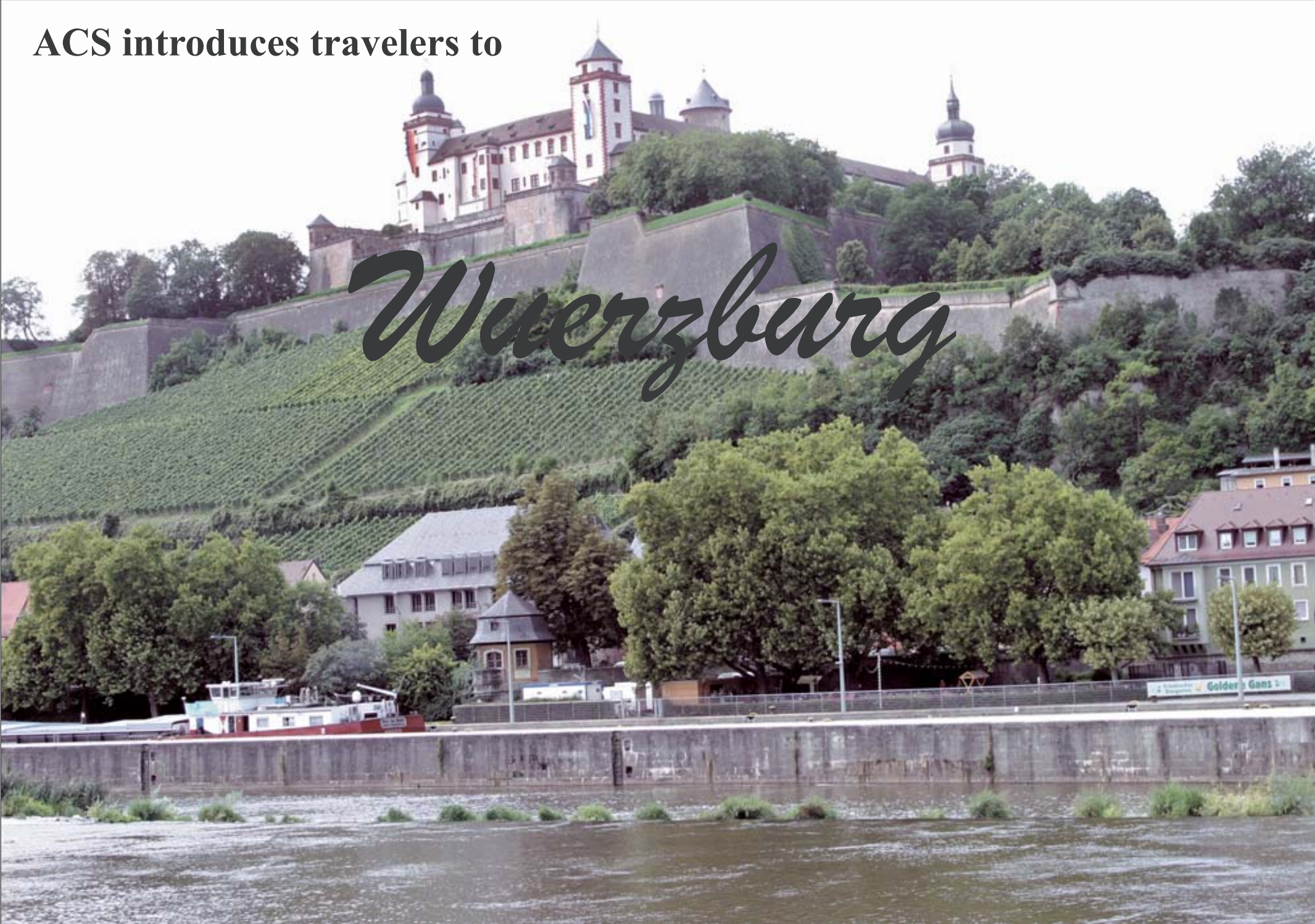


Photo by Gini Sinclair

The Marienberg sits atop a hill overlooking the Main River. The 12th century fortress serves as home for two museums today. The Mainfraenkisches Museum Wuerzburg has a collection of Franconian art, a prehistoric collection, an exhibit on the wine culture of Franconia, a folklore section and a display of baroque masterpieces.

White wines and roots dating to the early 7th century makes this city on the Main River sing

by Gini Sinclair
*U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach
Public Affairs*

Each month the Ansbach Army Community Service plans a trip to a destination in Germany where visitors can sightsee, try a local restaurant and learn about shopping on the economy. Community members pay only for transportation and their own expenses.

Recently, ACS traveled to Wuerzburg, a city of more than 130,000 people in upper Bavaria. Wuerzburg is situated in the center of Lower Franconia, a famous wine producing area, which is well-known for its dry white wines sold in a uniquely shaped bottle, the bocksbeutel. Wuerzburg is primarily a college town now, but was once home to powerful prince-bishops in the 10th century. Wuerzburg is considered the “pearl” of the Romantic Road.

Orientation

After a train ride from Ansbach, guide Claudia Garbers lead a group of nine Ansbach residents — minus one adventurous soul who went off alone — through the streets of town. The first destination was a stroll through the Residenz Platz gardens. The gardens have over 70,000 summer flowers transplanted each year. In 1981, the Residenz and the Court Gardens were placed on UNESCO’s World Cultural Heritage list. Being on the list requires the Palace Department to renovate the property and restore many of the areas to the way they were when they were built in the mid-1700s. A quick look into the Hofkirche, which is undergoing renovations,

gave visitors not only a glimpse of the ornate religious structure, but also provided insight into how artisans restore old and decorative artifacts. After visiting the Hofkirche, Garbers explained the many specialties carried by different stores in the area. She also gave tips for riding streetcars and parking in big cities like Wuerzburg. The walk ended at the Mainbruecke, where visitors enjoyed a spectacular view of the Main River and the Festung Marienberg, a 13th century fortress on the hillside above the river. During lunch, Garbers answered questions about the menu and explained how certain items are prepared. After lunch and a visit to the tourist office, group members split up and explored the city on their own. Nearly four hours later, the group met up and headed back to the main train station. When everyone settled onto the train, many discussed plans for coming back to Wuerzburg.

Although it was not her first trip to Wuerzburg, Jennifer Johnke joined the tour because she wanted to get out of the house while her husband was deployed. Johnke brought two daughters, ages 3 and 5, along for the trip. She said taking the girls to a place like Wuerzburg on the weekend would be too hard, and prefers taking the weekday trips like ACS offers. After lunch and a visit to the tourist office, group members split up and explored the city on their own. Nearly four hours later, the group met up and headed back to the main train station. When everyone settled onto the train, many discussed plans for coming back to Wuerzburg.

History

The town of Wuerzburg dates back to Celtic times. In the 7th century, a Frankish ducal court was established on the banks of the Main, and St. Boniface made it a bishopric. In the 12th century, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa made the town’s bishops dukes of Franconia and Wuerzburg developed into a European cultural center. A number of famous churches



Wikipedia Commons

The Residenz and the Court Gardens are on UNESCO’s World Cultural Heritage list which requires renovation and restoration of the the property to its original 1700s style.

testify to the religious beginnings of the city. The Catholic Parish Church of St. Burkard is on the site of a monastery found in A.D. 748. Most of the buildings are from the 11th century. In the burg is the Marienkirche, the second oldest church in Germany, (The Dom in Trier is the oldest). Some sections of the Marienkirche date back to A.D. 706. The Nuemuenster, the bishop’s church, was built in the 8th century, but the present church is based on a 13th century building. Overlooking the city is the Marienberg, where bishops lived from 1253 until 1720, before moving to the Residenz. Today, the Marienberg is open to the public with the Main-Franconian Museum on the second floor, and the prince’s apartment, Fuerstenbau Museum, with furnishings.

The Residenz has four halls with more than 100 rooms. The prince-bishops arranged storage space for 1.4 million liters of wine in the cellars. Today, the Residenz is open to the public.



Wikipedia Commons

The Wuerzburg Cathedral, called the Kiliansdom, and city hall, or Rathaus, share the skyline with the Marienberg.



Audre Ralls, left, 10, Carol Ralls, and Mary Henkel await the streetcar in downtown Wuerzburg.

Sgt. Michael Ragsdale, 527th Military Police Company, Katterbach, has lived in Ansbach for one year and has visited Wuerzburg several times. He went off alone to explore, but likes traveling with the group from Army Community Service.

Garrison security specialist Alonzo Edwards works for excellence at job, fatherhood

Story and photo by

John Reese

USAG Garmisch Public Affairs

Community members of U.S. Army Garrison Garmisch can sleep a little easier knowing security manager Alonzo Edwards is on the job keeping them safer.

Formerly a special ops intel analyst and Marshall Center security manager, Edwards, better known around the community as Lonnie, has been with the garrison for three years working for the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS). The soft-spoken security expert has a patient way of impressing those he protects with the importance of remaining vigilant against those who would cause harm to Americans abroad.

In Garmisch, everyone wears multiple hats to ensure the mission of constantly **providing exceptional programs and services for their customers in southern Bavaria** is a success. For an extended period in 2008-2009 between the outgoing and incoming DPTMS directors Edwards and the garrison anti-terrorism officer took on the heavy workload of additional duties, filling two vacant slots while working as a backup to the demanding job of antiterrorism officer, preparing for an oncoming Joint Staff Integrated Vulnerability Assessment (JSIVA).

In addition to his duties, as the garrison's alternate emergency manager he is a driving force with the garrison's emergency management team, developing plans and contingencies to report and respond effectively to all-hazard incidents which may impact the Garmisch com-

munity.

The retired Air Force master sergeant and intelligence analyst from Warrensville, Ohio, is always making improvements to security, conducting training and helping to orchestrate emergency operation center processes.

"As one of the garrison's action officers, I do more than issue clearances, and conduct background checks," said Edwards, his desk busy with the latest guidance as he writes his FP/OPSEC thought of the week. "I also plan, develop, administer and monitor a number of programs, like the higher-headquarter tasker suspense and training rosters, operation security or OPSEC, information security, communication security and physical security, down to coordinating various aspects of event planning operation orders OPORDS. In addition to ensuring all security program policies and regulations throughout the garrison meet or exceed the requirements expected by higher authorities, I and the rest of team-DPTMS help to maintain and coordinate the operations as our small garrison workforce rises to meet an ever-

increasing do-more-with-less workload and support operations tempo. And in Garmisch, they do. Over the past year, our small staff has received high marks on our garrison's inspections, annual exercises, accreditation initiatives and praise on hosted community activities."

His security credentials, education and experience in intelligence gathering are long and impeccable, but Edwards isn't one to rest on his laurels. He frequently makes random and annual security inspections of the garrison's three kasernes, sometimes support-

ing the ATO by walking perimeters to inspect fence lines, or performing seemingly mundane tasks like checking waste baskets and dumpsters on post for anything that could be of use to bad guys — and sometimes finding personal identifiable information (PII) or sensitive FOUO materials that could compromise individual or Army security.

"In 2007, I became the Garrison's OPSEC program manager, in that year we faced a number of OPSEC incidents which forced us and our tenant organizations to both re-evaluate our

processes, and re-engage in an aggressive training and awareness program. Since that time, we have incorporated dumpster diving as a routine part of our garrison security sweeps," said Edwards. "While we can never be totally free of OPSEC lapses, thanks to a clear focus, solid backing from leadership, and the combined efforts of our community, such lapses are no longer the rule, but instead the very rare exception."

After retiring from the Air Force, Edwards pulled double duty as a civilian employee and a specialized individual mobilization augmentee reserve airman in Stuttgart. Because of the needs of the service, he returned to duty and served from April 2003 to August 2010 at the headquarters of the U.S. European Command's Plans and Operations Center as a lead intelligence analyst.

"We were in the midst of a war — and the military services had a pressing need for both linguists and experienced, multidisciplinary intelligence analysts. The Air Force asked for my services again after I retired — and duty is duty, so, of course, I agreed," said Edwards modestly. "I work on an Army garrison, true, but I remain proud in blue as an Air Force senior NCO."

The only thing Edwards takes equally as serious as duty to the country is his responsibility as a father.

"My son, Jesse-James, is 12 years old now. He is the most important person in my world," said Edwards. "I have a good career and while I look forward to the next promotion and other challenges around the corner, I know I'll be a success in this world if my mission to be a good father is accomplished."



U.S. Soldiers fly to Latvia to participate in Operation Saber Strike 11

Soldiers from the 16th Sustainment Brigade board a plane in Nuremberg, Germany, at the Nuremberg Airport, Oct. 5. The brigade is participating in Operation Saber Strike 11 in Latvia.

Saber Strike 11, a cooperative training exercise between the U.S., Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia armed forces, will focus on command and control as well as interoperability.

It will consist of a brigade command post exercise and six company-level field training exercises and will help the militaries of the four participating nations to improve their joint operational capabilities in a variety of missions and prepare them for operations in Afghanistan as well as other multinational contingency operations around the world.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin

Army Family Financial Support Obligations

Story by

Capt. Josh Grubaugh

JMTC Office of the Staff Judge Advocate

Soldiers are required to provide adequate financial support to their family members, and command enforcement of family support obligations is mandated by Army Regulation (AR) 608-99. Soldiers who fail to financially support their families must be counseled, and may be subject to UCMJ action. So what does AR 608-99 require?

Essentially, AR 608-99 creates a fall-back requirement of support. This requirement kicks in when there is not a custom-made agreement between the husband and wife, or a court order of child support or alimony. The Army's fall-back requirement sets the amount of support based upon a Soldier's pay grade. For example, in 2010 an E-4 must pay \$699 in support to family members.

AR 608-99 is essentially the Army's way of ensuring family members are supported in all circumstances, but it takes a one-size-fits-all approach. Because of this fall-back support provision, sometimes AR

608-99 may appear unfair. For example, a Soldier could have been married for only a few years without any kids, but still pay a lot of money in sup-

port of a spouse. The amount may be much higher than any court would ever award during a divorce. If the marriage has broken down, then the Soldier in that circumstance should seek a divorce or separation agreement as soon as possible. Additionally, it doesn't matter if the Soldier receives BAH or not. A Soldier must still pay the amount required by AR

608-99, regardless of receipt of BAH. There are times when the Army does take individual circumstances into account. For

ing in government housing but a German legal authority requests that the Soldier pay additional support. Soldiers must understand that German courts are not always satisfied with housing being the sole means of support, and this can also be true of courts in America. Bottom line, court orders must be followed — AR 608-99 is very clear on this.

The preceding information is meant only as a guide. Free legal counsel is available at local legal assistance offices. Every person's legal troubles are unique and require an individual consultation. Again, this advice is free and consultations will be kept confidential.

The following are the legal assistance offices in Bavaria: Grafenwoehr, DSN 475-7114, CIV 09641-83-7114, Building 106; Ansbach, DSN 467-2103, CIV 09802-83-2103, Bldg 5817; Vilseck, DSN 476-2289, CIV 09662-83-2289, Bldg 245; Hohenfels, DSN 466-2401, CIV 09472-83-2401, Bldg 313; Schweinfurt, DSN 353-8384, CIV 09721-96-8384, Bldg 1; Bamberg, DSN 469-8832, CIV 0951-300-8832, Bldg 7000; Illesheim, DSN 467-4576, CIV 09841-83-4576, Bldg 6506.



Grubaugh

example, if family members live in government housing, then a Soldier has satisfied his or her support obligation under AR 608-99. So as far as the Army is concerned, a Soldier does not have to pay additional support when the family members reside in government housing. Here in Germany, though, confusion often arises when family members are liv-

Legal advice for separating Soldiers

Medical Evaluation Board process doesn't have to be confusing

by **R. Charles Collica II**

MEB Outreach Counsel - Europe

Service members new to the Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) and Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) process are most often confused and weighed down with questions concerning their legal rights. MEB Outreach Counsel (MEB Counsel) and Soldiers Counsel (PEB Counsel) are licensed attorneys available to provide information, advice and representation to Soldiers throughout the MEB-PEB process.

The MEB Outreach Counsel is available to assist each individual Soldier from the moment he or she is referred into the MEB process. At the beginning, general advice and assistance is provided in developing a strategy to reach the Soldier's desired outcome. As the Soldier progresses through the system, the MEB Outreach Counsel can provide more specific advice and representation. The Soldiers Counsel is available to represent the Soldier once the case progresses from the MEB to the PEB stage.

The MEB Outreach Counsel who serves all Soldiers in USA-REUR is located in the Wiesbaden Legal Center and has an office located in Vilseck Legal Center. Soldiers Counsel offices are located at Landstuhl, Heidelberg and Vilseck.

If you reside in U.S. Army Europe and are undergoing an MEB-PEB, legal teams are available at the following locations: Heidelberg: DSN 371-2091, CIV 06221-17-2091; Wiesbaden: DSN 337-4738, CIV 0611-705-4738; Landstuhl: DSN 486-8286, CIV 06371-86-8286; Vilseck: DSN 476-3358, CIV 09662-83-3358.

Don't try to navigate this complex process on your own. Don't hesitate; take advantage of the free legal advice and representation available to you now. Your rights and benefits may be adversely affected if you don't.

Holiday mailing deadlines approaching

by Master Sgt. Christina Steiner
Army News Service

FORT KNOX, Ky. — Packages to troops and civilians stationed outside the continental United States need to be mailed soon in order to make it there by the holidays, according to Peter Graeve, deputy director of the Military Postal Service Agency in Alexandria, Va.

Christmas mailing deadlines include:

Packages going to Iraq, Afghanistan and other places around the world through the U.S. Postal Service should be mailed by Nov. 12.

Space Available

Packages sent by Space Available Mail, or SAM, should be sent by Nov. 20 to contingency locations, such as Army and Air Force Post Offices known as APOs, Fleet Post Offices or FPOs, Diplomatic Post Offices known as DPOs serving embassies or consulates, and certain country codes with ZIP codes beginning with 093XX. The SAM deadline for all other overseas military locations is Nov. 26.

Priority mail

The priority mail deadline is Dec. 4 to contingency locations. The deadline for all other locations is Dec. 10.

Express mail

Although express mail military services aren't available to contingency locations, express mail military services are available to other locations if mailed by Dec. 18.

Always check with the local post office to determine if this service is available for a particular APO/FPO/DPO address, officials warn.

"Usually the mail deadlines run about the same every year, especial-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli

Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, Colorado Army National Guard, unload letters and packages from loved ones prior to the holiday rush, at Camp Ramadi, Iraq.

ly to Southwest Asia," Graeve said. "Only so many flights go there, and there's only so much air capacity to make sure (packages) get there as soon as possible.

The two gateway airports from the states are JFK (Queens, N.Y.) and San Francisco, which services most of the Pacific theater.

Restrictions

"The only real difference from year to year is that the dates may vary by a day or two based on the calen-

dar," he said. "The list of restricted items going to Southwest Asia hasn't changed, but in Europe they've started cracking down at the customs offices. Every country has different restrictions, but the basic guideline of (a parcel) not weighing more than 70 pounds and the girth not being more than 130 inches in most cases still apply

Graeve encouraged those interested in mailing gifts overseas to always check their local post office for that

country's restrictions.

Deadlines and restrictions depend upon world locations and vary from each other, said Faye Slater, MPSA's other deputy director. For a complete list of deadlines and banned items from the U.S. mail system, visit the U.S. Postal Service website at www.usps.com. For a list of restricted items that cannot be mailed to APO/FPOs/DPOs and certain country codes, see the FAQ link at <http://hqdainet.army.mil/mpsa/faqweb.pdf>.

Mailing packages downrange is a snap

by USAG Grafenwoehr
Postal Service Centers
News Release

The first in a two-part Q-and-A series.

As the holidays approach, spouses and friends head to the post office with those presents, forgotten necessities and little luxuries that remind deployed Soldiers of home. But aside from the confusion as to what form to fill out, some of those harmless household items could cause your package to be returned or even cost you a hefty fine. We've gathered some frequently asked questions to answer some of the most common issues concerning getting your mail safely in the hands of your loved one.

Q: Does the post office provide tape and packing materials?

A: The post office provides no packing materials, however, bubble wrap is available for purchase at both the PX and the commissary. We do provide priority tape for use when shipping a priority package, and paper tape for parcel posts or MPS packages. Neither of these is suitable for attaching an address label. Packages wrapped with priority tape must be shipped priority. Packages en route to the U.S. should not be wrapped with duct or masking tape. Again, the providing of tape is subject to budgetary constraints.

Q: What is the largest package I can ship?

A: All packages have a maximum weight of 70 pounds. Parcel post and MPS packages can measure up to 130 inches in combined length and girth (distance around the thickest part). Priority mail has a maximum size of 108 inches in length and girth.

Q: Can I insure my package?

A: You can insure any package against damage or loss, but you must also pay any shipping charges. So to insure packages using a prepaid return label or MPS mail, the regular postage rate will also apply. Only insure package for the contents' actual value.

Q: How do I file an insurance claim for a damaged package?

A: For any packages that were insured, you may file a claim either at your local post office or online at www.usps.com/insuranceclaims/online. You will need to provide PS Form 3813-P (blue insurance form) or PS Form 3813 (black insurance form) and proof of value (sales receipt, credit card receipt, similar item found on the Internet or magazine) in order to process the claim.

Take the damaged article to your local post office in the original mailing container with all wrapping material for inspection and further processing.



A gaggle of giggling Soldiers participates in a laughing exercise during the Soldier 360° program at Rose Barrack's Multipurpose Room, recently.

Warriors learn new techniques

Continued from page 1

"It's very different from the Army's natural approach, but maybe that's what we need," he said. "We are all different in how we apply ourselves and deal with things. We are learning to no longer avoid the emotions we have and that helps us really understand ourselves.

"All aspects of this program are explained and scientifically researched," continued Ramos. "We know why we are feeling what we feel and how we can combat it — through meditation, laughter, physical activity."

Additionally, group sessions within the Soldier 360° program allow participants to speak candidly of their experiences downrange and learn more about stress management, relaxation, mindfulness and conflict resolution.

“My eyes have been opened. This program will make me a better husband, father, Soldier and leader.”

Sgt. 1st Class James Gibson
Joint Multinational Readiness Center,
U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels

The program supports the tenants of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness and the Army's Health Promotion, Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention. The overall goal is to further improve Soldiers both physically and emotionally, according to Col. Mike Bendich, Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security, U.S. Army Reserve, who is the special activities officer for the program.

Although the course has received overwhelmingly

positive feedback from participants, the program is still evolving.

"We improve as we go along and are learning from the Soldiers. They tell us what they need to reset and help their fellow Soldiers do the same," said Bendich. "Everyone faces their own challenges and we are not here to fix the Soldiers; we are here to help them find the root of the issues they face as military members in today's Army, and help ease the healing process."

Get up to \$25,000 cash for your ideas

by Sgt. Joel Salgado
U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs

HEIDELBERG, Germany — U.S. Army Europe Soldiers and civilian employees can be awarded up to \$25,000 by submitting their ideas to improve the Army through the Army Suggestion Program.

Soldiers, U.S. federal employees and local national civilian employees who are paid from appropriated funds are eligible to take part in the program, said Joseph (J.D.) Jerdee, the Level 2 ASP actions coordinator for Installation Management Command Europe.

"The Army Suggestion Program is a program that encourages Soldiers, civilians, and any concerned individual, to submit ideas that will result in increased efficiencies and reduced costs," Jerdee said.

Although the Army established the program in 1943, this could be a good time to take advantage of the program because of the current emphasis on cost savings within the Department of Defense and the Army. For example, the DoD finished accepting suggestions Sept. 24 from across the services — nearly 15,000 of them — that are eligible for cash awards under its INVEST cost-savings initiative.

According to the ASP website, all suggestions submitted through the program must benefit the Army or other U.S. government activities by identifying a problem and recommending a solution for it.

"Suggestions follow a review and approval process based on the level of the suggestion. In other words, if the suggestion is specific to the installation, it can be reviewed and approved or disapproved at that level," said Jerdee. "Ideas that require higher-level review for approval are forwarded through the system to the appropriate level."

If a suggestion is approved and implemented by the Army, an assessment is made to determine how much the initiative saves the Army. Depending on the amount saved, "sug-gesters" can earn up to \$25,000 for their ideas.

Individuals who are not eligible for cash awards may still be able to make suggestions and could receive a plaque or certificate for their ideas. Army Regulation 5-17 (The Army Ideas for Excellence Program) outlines how that process works, who is eligible for cash awards for approved suggestions and how cash awards are determined. According to that regulation, the money is paid after final approval is granted, and comes from the appropriated funds of the individual's unit or organization. More information about determining cash awards can be found in AR 5-17, Table 5-1.

The program is ongoing, and suggestions can be made at any time. For more information or to submit an idea, visit the ASP website at <http://asp.hqda.pentagon.mil/public> (available to Army Knowledge Online registered users only). Suggesters unable to access AKO can submit a DA Form 1045 (Army Ideas for Excellence Program Proposal) to their installation ASP coordinator.

U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr's Army Suggestion Program coordinator is Achim Bahr and can be reached at 475-7913 or achim.barr1@us.army.mil.

Army suggestions = \$\$\$